

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OPR-02 A-01 SY-05 OC-05 CCO-00

SCCT-01 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 H-02 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 USIE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

IO-10 NEAE-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 PER-01 EB-07 FAA-00

DOTE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-05 (ISO) W

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O R 021455Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5084

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 8382

DEPT FOR WLK

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: KARAME GOVT OFF TO GOOD START

REFS: A. BEIRUT 8317; B. BEIRUT 8335

1. BEIRUT RADIO MORNING JULY 2 INFORMED CITIZENS THAT ROUTES INTO CITY SAFE AND URGED THEM TO RETURN TO WORK, THEREBY UNDERLINING CONSIDERABLE (BUT NOT COMPLETE) EASING OF TENSIONS WHICH HAVE GRIPPED CITY AND COUNTRY DURING RECENT DAYS. IN SAME ANNOUNCEMENT, LEBANESE LIAISON CENTER CAUTIONED RESIDENTS TO AVOID TAYOUNI, SHIAH AND AIN RUMANNEH AREAS WHICH ARE NOT RPT NOT CONSIDERED SECURE. WHILE NEW CABINET FORMED JULY 1 BY PRIMIN RASHID KARAME HAS GOTTEN OFF TO GOOD START TOWARD PUSHING EVIL GENIE OF CIVIL STRIFE BACK INTO BOTTLE, MUCH EFFORT REMAINS BEFORE CORK IS IN PLACE.

2. SOON AFTER DISTRIBUTION OF CABINET PORTFOLIOS YESTERDAY, KARAME CONVENED WHAT IS PROBABLY HIGHEST LEVEL GOL/PLO MEETING WITNESSED SINCE NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO CAIRO AGREEMENT IN 1969. GOL AND PLO REPS, HEADED BY KARAME AND YASSIR 'ARAFAT RESPECTIVELY, AGREED IN PRESENCE OF SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM (WHO HAD REMAINED IN BEIRUT DESPITE REPORTS TO THE CONTRARY) TO SEVEN-POINT PROGRAM (FBIS JN011813Y) DESIGNED TO ENFORCE CEASEFIRE AND PREVENT FURTHER CLASHES OR PROVOCATIONS IN BEIRUT AND OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY. NEW INTERIOR MINISTER, FORMER PRES CAMILLE CHAMOUN, REINFORCED EFFECT OF MEETING BY ANNOUNCING PUBLICLY, SHORTLY AFTER 1800 LOCAL, THAT, IN ADDITION TO CONTINUING COOPERATION OF JOINT GOL/PLO PATROLS, INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES WILL TAKE UP POSITIONS THROUGHOUT BEIRUT AND ITS SUBURBS WITH ORDERS TO "OPEN FIRE WITHOUT HESITATION AT ANY ELEMENT THAT MAY CHALLENGE LAW AND ORDER." LEAVING NO DOUBT ABOUT THE GOL'S TOUGH POLICY, CHAMOUN WARNED THAT "THE OWNER OF ANY BUILDING WHERE SNIPERS MAY TAKE POSITIONS WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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INFORMING THE AUTHORITIES IN ADVANCE ABOUT THE SNIPERS" AND THAT "SOURCES OF BULLETS WILL BE HIT BY CANNON SHELLS REGARDLES OF THE CONSEQUENCES." CHAMOUN ADDED THAT HE DID NOT RPT NOT FEEL THE NEED TO REQUEST ARMY INTERVENTION AT THIS TIME BUT COMMENTED THAT HE WILL NOT RPT NOT HESITATE TO CALL FOR THE ARMY SHOULD CONDITIONS DEMAND SUCH ACTION.

3. PRIMIN KARAME ADDRESSED THE LEBANESE PEOPLE SHORTLY

FOLLOWING THE SESSION WITH 'ARAFAT, PROMISING TO WORK TO RESTORE SECURITY AND ACHIEVE LEGITIMATE "DEMANDS", INCLUDING THE RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE AMONG LEBANESE AND BETWEEN LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS (FBIS JN011840Y). HE REPEATED THAT, FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE PRESSING TASKS REGARDING SECURITY, THE PRESENT CABINET WILL BE EXPANDED OR REPLACED BY GOVT OF NATIONAL UNION--A COMMITMENT INTENDED TO REASSURE BOTH THE PHALANGISTS AND THE JUMBLATTISTS WHO ARE NOT RPT NOT REPRESENTED IN THE NEW CABINET. THERE IS WIDESPREAD ANTICIPATION THAT THE KARAME CABINET WILL SOON MAKE A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE BEFORE THE LEBANESE PARLIAMENT AND PREPARATIONS ARE REPORTEDLY UNDER WAY TO FIX A DATE FOR THIS SESSION. NO RPT NO PROBLEM IS EXPECTED IN OBTAINING VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

4. THE GOL/PLO AGREEMENT TO ENFORCE A CEASEFIRE WAS DISCUSSED LATER IN THE EVENING OF JULY 2 BY FEDAYEEN LEADERS (INCLUDING THOSE REPRESENTING "REJECTIONIST" GROUP) AND REPS OF LEBANESE LEFTIST AND "PROGRESSIVE" PARTIES AND GROUPS. WITH VARYING DEGREES OF ENTHUSIASM, THESE GROUPS ANNOUNCED THEIR ADHERENCE TO THE SEVEN-POINT CEASEFIRE FORMULA. "PROGRESSIVES", HOWEVER, HAVE WITHHELD PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW GOVT PENDING MEETING, SCHEDULED FOR JULY 3, WITH KAMEL JUMBLATT WHO HAS BEEN IN EGYPT MEETING WITH PRES SADAT. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT JUMBLATT WILL AT LEAST ACQUIESCE IN CABINET DECISION AND KHADDAM ANNOUNCED, PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR DAMASCUS, THAT JUMBLATT WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT CABINET AS LONG AS IT IS COMMITTED TO "NATIONAL DEMANDS" (E.G., REVISION OF ARMY LAW, REVISION OF NATURALIZATION LAW, ETC.). THERE HAVE THUS FAR BEEN NO RPT NO OFFICIAL REPORTS OF JUMBLATT'S TALKS WITH SADAT, BUT EGYPTIAN NEWS AGENCY, MENA, IN BEIRUT LAST EVENING RECEIVED INFORMAL WORD FROM CAIRO THAT DISCUSSIONS HAD BEEN "POSITIVE."

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5. WHILE GOL/PLO ACCORD AND STRINGENT INTERNAL SECURITY MEASURES ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT GENERATED MOMENTUM TOWARD RESTORATION OF SEMBLANCE OF ORDER IN COUNTRY, SOME INCIDENTS CONTINUED NEVERTHELESS. BEGINNING AT APPROX 2000 LOCAL JULY 2 (I.E., DUSK) SHOOTING AND SOME EXPLOSIONS WERE HEARD IN BEIRUT AND WE UNDERSTAND BOMBING OCCURRED LIKEWISE IN TRIPOLI. PROVOCATEURS, WHO WERE MAKING FRANTIC EFFORT TO DERAIL MOVEMENT TOWARD CALM WERE BY AND LARGE UNSUCCESSFUL. PRIMARY FOCUS OF DANGER SWITCHED FOR TIME BEING TO AREAS OUTSIDE OF CAPITAL, PARTICULARLY BAALBEK/HERMEL AREA WHERE TENSION BETWEEN SHI'ITE AND CHRISTIAN VILLAGES ROSE AS RESULT OF REPORTED BEATINGS, ETC. SHI'ITE IMAM MUSA SADR, WHO DISCONTINUED HIS HUNGER STRIKE EVENING JULY 1, ISSUED APPEAL TO HIS SUPPORTERS IN AREA TO

ESCHEW VIOLENCE. IMAM'S PERSONAL AIDE INFORMED EMBOFF
MORNING JULY 2 THAT IMAM IS ON HIS WAY TO BAALBEK THIS MORN-
ING TO DEFUSE POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS CONFESSIONAL PROBLEM.

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IO-10 NEAE-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 PER-01 EB-07 FAA-00

DOTE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-05 /104 W

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O R 021455Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5085

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 8382

DEPT FOR WLG

STUTTGART FOR ELG

6. BEIRUT RESIDENTS, WHO DESPERATELY WANT TO BELIEVE CARNAGE IS BEHIND THEM BUT REMAIN BADLY SHELL SHOCKED, ARE BEGINNING TO VENTURE OUT AS MORNING PASSES WITHOUT MAJOR INCIDENT. WE WOULD PLACE TRAFFIC AT SOME WHAT MORE THAN ONE THIRD NORMAL AND SOME SHOPS ARE STARTING TO OPEN. ONE PARTICULARLY DISTURBING NOTE IS FACT THAT, DESPITE SEVEN POINT ACCORD, SOME BARRICADES APPARENTLY HAVE NOT RPT NOT BEEN DISMANTLED WE HAVE FIRST HAND REPORT OF PHALANGIST ROADBLOCK ABOVE TEL ZAATAR CAMP. ARMED ELEMENTS MANNING BARRICADE DECLARE THEY WILL NOT PERMIT TRAFFIC INTO CITY UNTIL MAN, ALLEGEDLY KIDNAPPED FROM NEARBY MANSOURIYEH, IS RESTORED UNHARMED. EMBOFF WHO TRAVELLED THIS MORNING FROM BYBLOS TO EMBASSY REPORTS THAT HE PASSED THROUGH EIGHT ROADBLOCKS DURING JOURNEY (ARMY TWO, ONE INTERNAL SECURITY AND FIVE UNIDENTIFIED). AS NOTED ABOVE, MINOR INCIDENTS APPARENTLY CONTINUES IN NEIGHBORHOODS WHICH ORIGINALLY SPAWNED LATEST ROUND. TOLL OF MOST RECENT FIGHTING CANNOT BE COMPILED WITH ANY DEGREE OF ACCURACY AT THIS TIME, BUT EYE-WITNESSES DESCRIBE MOST AFFECTED QUARTERS AS HAVING "BOMBED-OUT" APPEARANCE. OUR BEST ESTIMATE OF KILLED IN LAST TEN DAYS IS 250 TO 300 WITH WOUNDED AT BETWEEN 700 AND ONE THOUSAND.

7. SO FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, MEMBERS OF AMERICAN COMMUNITY REMAIN SAFE. DURING LAST SEVERAL NIGHTS (INCLUDING NIGHT JULY 1&2) SEVERAL BUILDINGS IN WHICH OFFICIAL AMERICANS LIVE WERE AMONG THOSE SUBJECT TO BOMB ATTACKS, BUT NO RPT NO INJURIES SUSTAINED. AIRPORT IS OPERATING NORMALLY AND AIRPORT ROAD IS MORE SECURE THAN IT HAS BEEN IN LAST WEEK AT THIS TIME SOME UNOFFICIAL AMERICANS AND OTHER FOREIGNERS, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY GOING AHEAD WITH PLANS TO LEAVE BEIRUT, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY. WE ARE RELAXING SOMEWHAT INSTRUCTIONS TO OFFICIAL AMERICANS TO PERMIT NORMAL SHOPPING IN "SECURE" AREAS AND VISIT NEARBY BEACHES. INSTRUCTIONS TO REMAIN IN HOMES DURING HOURS OF DARKNESS REMAIN STRICTLY IN FORCE.

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8. COMMENT: FIRST ACTIONS OF KARAME GOVT APPEAR TO JUSTIFY OUR HOPE(PARA 5, REFTELA) FOR EXPEDITIOUS AND DECISIVE ACTION. THERE NO RPT NO QUESTION RE CHAMOUN'S TOUGHNESS AND HIS PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF DRASTIC ACTION BY SECURITY FORCES IN FACE OF PROVOCATION PLACES GOL ON RECORD FOR FIRST TIME IN EIGHTEEN MONTHS AS BACKING SECURITY FORCES. FORTIFIED WITH THIS BACKING AND UNAMBIGUOUS INSTRUCTIONS, IT IS HOPED THAT SECURITY FORCES WILL EXHIBIT GREATER INITIATIVE AND DETERMINATION IN CONFRONTING THREATS TO STILL DELICATE PUBLIC ORDER. KARAME'S ENGAGEMENT OF ARAFAT AND OTHER PALESTINIAN LEADERS IN COMMITMENT TO RESTORING ORDER ALSO STRENGTHENS PRIMIN'S HAND IN DEALING WITH TROUBLE MAKERS FORCES OF LAW AND ORDER, THEREFORE, ARE IN STRONGER POSITION THAN THEY HAVE BEEN IN RECENT WEEKS AND UNRECONCILED RADICAL AND THOSE IN THE PAY OF LIBYA AND IRAQ NOW FIND THEMSELVES INCREASINGLY ISOLATED AT THIS TIME. ON BALANCE. IT APPEARS THAT ARAFAT HAS FOLLOWED THROUGH WITH A POSTIVE AND REASONABLY CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE ALONG THE LINES SKETCHED OUT IN BEIRUT 8208 KHADDAM ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN HELPFUL AND WE HAVE HEARD THAT HE PERSONALLY LEANED HEAVILY ON KAMAL SHATILA, LEBANESE NASSERIST ALLEGEDLY ON HIRE TO LIBYA, EVENING OF JULY 1.

9. WHILE WE HAVE GROUNDS FOR SOME OPTIMISM RE SECURITY SITUATION AT THIS TIME, CLAIM IS FAR FROM ASSURED. MOTIVES (PERSONAL AND POLITICAL). MEANS, AND OPPORTUNITY (ALTHOUGH CERTAINLY MORE LIMITED THAN PREVIOUSLY) FOR FURTHER TERRORISM ARE STILL PRESENT. WITH EACH PASSING DAY (AND MORE PARTICULARLY NIGHT) OF RELATIVE CALM, DEGREE OF CALM AND CONFIDENCE WILL BE RESTORED, BUT GOL WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO ACT, AS WELL AS SPEAK FIRMLY TO CONTAIN PROVOCATIONS. WE WOULD EXPECT TROUBLEMAKERS TO RESORT, UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, TO HIT AND RUN TACTICS RATHER THAN SEEK TO FOMENT CLASHES. BOMBINGS USING INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED TIMING MECHANISMS WHICH HAVE BEGUN TO APPEAR REMAIN MOST LIKELY DANGER AND ALSO CONSTITUTE MOST DIFFICULT FORMTHREAT FOR SECURITY FORCES TO GUARD AGAINST. IN MEANTIME, ASSUMING RELATIVE CALM IS RESTORED, THERE ARE MANY ELEMEMENTS PRESENT WHICH WILL BIDE THEIR TIME WAITING FOR OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLOIT, OR CREATE, INCIDENTS TO PLUNGE COUNTRY ONCE MORE INTO CHAOS. EVEN MOST OPTIMISTIC OF LEBANESE TO WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN NOT RPT NOT PREPARED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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BELIEVE THAT LEBANON HAS PURCHASED MORE THAN RESPITE FROM ITS AGONY.
GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, PROGRESS REPORTS, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT08382
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750230-0764
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750789/aaaadbsl.tel
Line Count: 329
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BEIRUT 8317, 75 BEIRUT 8335
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <03 OCT 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KARAME GOVT OFF TO GOOD START
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, LE, PLO
To: STATE DIA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006